Amendments to the specification:

Please amend paragraphs 78, 82, and 86 as shown below:

[0078] In Step 730, the online return application 150 generates and sends a return ~~service~~ shipping email 630 to the customer 120. In one embodiment, the return ~~service~~ shipping email 630 includes a link to an image file of a return ~~service~~ shipping label 400. The return ~~service~~ shipping email 630 can also include an encoded label delivery link 625. In a preferred embodiment, the online return application 150 generates the encoded label delivery link 625, which is a hypertext link to a uniform resource locator (URL) with additional information appended that identifies the return shipping label 400 generated for the return service request 305. In a preferred embodiment of the delivery link 625 includes a link to a URL. But it will be readily apparent that the delivery link 625 may include any encoded or encrypted string of characters which will cause the online return application or other application in the return services system to respond with an image of the desired shipping label. Moreover, the shipping label delivered to the customer browser may be returned from a storage location or generated dynamically at the time of activation of the link 625.

[0082] In a preferred embodiment, the information appended to the URL in the label delivery link 625 to identify a return ~~service~~ shipping label 400 includes a package tracking number 375, a locality string 635, a merchant registration identification 640 and, optionally, a return ~~service~~ shipping label creation date 630. Because this information identifies a return ~~service~~ shipping label 400 it contains potentially sensitive shipping information; therefore, in a preferred embodiment, the information is encrypted to prevent unauthorized access as the return ~~service~~ shipping email 630 passes through a computer network 100 such as the Internet. In the preferred embodiment, the information string appended to the label delivery link 625 is encrypted using triple data encryption standard (DES) techniques and is encoded.

[0086] In one embodiment, a return shipping label 400 and/or the shipping information necessary to regenerate a return shipping label 400 is indexed by the package tracking number 375 and merchant registration identification 640. In an effort to obtain additional security, an alternative embodiment may also require a return ~~service~~ shipping label creation date 630 to regenerate a return ~~service~~ shipping label 400. In such an embodiment, the return ~~service~~ shipping label creation date 630 may be included in the encrypted and encoded information string transmitted to the online return application 150 upon activation of the label delivery link 625.